



Bike Patrol 1995



Captain Jim Peschong



Sergeant Mike Siefkes



Officer Jim Ashley



Officer Mike Bassett



Officer Tom Duden



Officer Brian Hoefler



Officer Charlie Marti



Officer Lance Worley



1995 Bike Patrol
Rums With Scissors

Officer Jim Ashley, Officer Brian Hoefer, Officer Tom Daden, Sergeant Mike Siefkes, Officer Lance Worley, Officer Mike Bassett, Officer Charlie Marti



1995 Recruiting Poster

1995 Midwest Police Bike Competition
Second runner up All Events
8-27-1995

Officer Charlie Marti & Officer Brian Hoefer

The bike patrol participated in the Midwest Police Bike Competition in Omaha for the first time.

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COPS ON BIKES...

LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT'S ANSWER TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING

Quickly and quietly, the police officer pedaled his mountain bike up the steep incline of the ramp, leading into the large parking garage. Gliding silently along, he suddenly spied a figure crouched down beside one of the vehicles, hastily attempting to pry open the lock of the car door.

The officer had just witnessed a larceny in progress and because he was able to approach unnoticed he caught the perpetrator in the act and made a successful arrest.

The year was 1975. The city of Lincoln could boast of a reasonably safe downtown area, and the shopping and entertainment center was thriving.

The Lincoln Police Department's downtown beat consisted of 4 Sergeants and 21 officers walking the area from 7th to 27th streets from R to K.

Budget concerns however, would soon change that picture. It was decided that the city could no longer afford officers walking a beat, and a new approach was adopted, putting them into police cruisers and spreading them out across the city.

As time went by, it became apparent that this policy change was having a negative impact in the area. The police department had lost its finger on the pulse of the downtown, and was no longer in tune with what was happening in the inner city.

With the crime rate on the rise, the search for a solution began. The suggestion was made that a unique idea seen on television just might be the answer. It was decided to take officers out of cruisers and rather than walking a beat put them on bikes in order to extend their range of patrol. But with no funds available to purchase bicycles it appeared doomed before it could begin. A suggestion was made to utilize the bicycles that hadn't sold at the auction of unclaimed recovered stolen bikes and the Lincoln Police Department Bike Patrol became a reality.

As Sergeant Michael Siefkes and his partner rolled out of the station on the refurbished bicycles outfitted with very little equipment and no helmets, little did they know how successful this experiment would be.

The very first night as the two cops rode onto the campus of Lincoln High School they suddenly observed a burglary in progress.

Upon completing the arrest, as they were returning to the station, they came upon another burglary in progress, this time at a residence.

Having made the second arrest they were resuming their patrol when a few blocks down the street they came upon a larceny in progress. A vehicle parked on the street was being broken into. They then made their third arrest of the night and it was quite obvious that the "cops on bikes" idea was a winner.

Instead of randomly patrolling, the officers chose to target specific areas and they were determined to attempt to increase their number of on sight arrests by 3 to 5 times that of the cruiser officers. Their unique capabilities would eventually allow them to make more drug arrests than the narcotics unit.

From a vantage point on the top level of a parking garage high above the city streets, two officers observed the activities below through their high-powered binoculars. As they carefully surveyed the scene below, they viewed a vehicle occupied by two males in the process of preparing to "snort" cocaine. As the suspects were cutting up the drug on a mirror, two bike officers silently rode up from behind, reached in through the window and grasped the evidence out of their hands. Thus, another successful on sight arrest was made, proving once again, the value of this elite unit.

From its humble beginnings with one officer and one Sergeant the Lincoln Police Department bike unit has grown to a Sergeant and 6 officers. As word spread of the effectiveness of the bike patrol private donations became available allowing the purchase of sturdy mountain bikes and equipment to replace the old bikes which were wearing out.

Today the bike unit, headed by 20 year veteran Sergeant Mike Siefkes, boasts 12 fully equipped mountain bicycles plus the old

continued

COPS ON BIKES...

conventional bikes and racks up 15 to 75 miles per day and because they ride every day all year round they average 10,000 to 15,000 miles per year.

Law enforcement bike patrols are spreading across the nation and as a result bicycle manufacturers worldwide, anxious to be the vendor of choice, are providing to the city, through the bidding process, fully equipped bicycles normally costing \$2000.00 for a considerably reduced price of \$339.00. The bikes are also guaranteed for life. If they break they are replaced free of charge. Many companies also provide equipment free for testing purposes.

Equipment provided each officer includes helmets, binoculars, video cameras with a 10 to 1 zoom lens, collapsible night sticks, gloves, whistles, several handcuffs and revolvers. Although these officers ride year round in rain and sleet, heat and cold, there is a waiting list of those who are anxious to take their turn on these two wheel mobile units. Each officer must apply every year and seniority counts for nothing.


Bicycle locks are also provided, however, occasionally due to an emergency situation, time does not permit the officer to apply the lock and the bike is stolen. This has occurred on two separate occasions. One was traced to a college dorm room in Colorado and the other was never recovered.

Now 7 years old, the LPD bike unit is the oldest bike patrol in the state of Nebraska. It has proven to be extremely economical compared to cruisers. Figures show that the annual cost of purchasing and maintaining one bicycle is the same as the cost of fuel for one cruiser.

One negative aspect is the inability to transport prisoners to jail. The solution has been to utilize parking personnel vehicles. They no longer drive Cushmans but are issued Geos instead. Bicycle racks are mounted on the back allowing the officers to escort the prisoners to jail.

At least half of the Lincoln Police Department has been trained in bike patrolling and other agencies in the state have also received training while still others are requesting to be included.

Citizen response to this unique form of community policing as expressed in the UNL student newspaper "The Daily Nebraskan" demonstrates the kind of positive acceptance accorded the bike patrol. Students say "we feel safe yet the officers don't interfere with our fun".

Not all experiments are successful but LPD's bike patrol has been a phenomenal success. Initiative, imagination, and ambition combined with hard work and determination have all contributed equally to the Department's success and without question the citizens of Lincoln have benefited and the downtown area is .

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